From the Classroom to Digital Learning Environments: An Action Research on Pedagogical Practices in Higher Education

Authors : Marie Alexandre, Jean Bernatchez

Abstract : This paper focuses on the complexity of the face-to-face-to-distance learning transition process. Our research action aims to support the process of transition from classroom to distance learning for teachers in higher education with regard to pedagogical practices that can meet the various needs of students using digital learning environments. In Quebec and elsewhere in the world, the advent of digital education is helping to transform teaching, which is significantly changing the role of teachers. While distance education implies a dissociation of teaching and learning to a variable degree in space and time, distance education (DE) is becoming more and increasingly becoming a preferred option for maintaining the delivery of certain programs and providing access to programs and to provide access to quality activities throughout Quebec. Given the impact of teaching practices on educational success, this paper reports on the results of three research objectives: 1) To document teachers' knowledge of teaching in distance education through the design, experimentation and production of a repertoire of the determinants of pedagogical practices in response to students' needs. 2) Explain, according to a gendered logic, the adequacy between the pedagogical practices implemented in distance learning and the response to the profiles and needs expressed by students using digital learning environments; 3) Produce a model of a support approach during the process of transition from classroom to distance learning at the college level. A mixed methodology, i.e., a quantitative component (questionnaire survey) and a qualitative component (explanatory interviews and living lab) was used in cycles that were part of an ongoing validation process. The intervention includes the establishment of a professional collaboration group, webinars training webinars for the participating teachers on the didactic issue of knowledge-teaching in FAD, the didactic use of technologies, and the differentiated socialization models of educational success in college education. All of the tools developed will be used by partners in the target environment as well as by all teacher educators, students in initial teacher training, practicing teachers, and the general public. The results show that access to training leading to qualifications and commitment to educational success reflects the existing links between the people in the educational community. The relational stakes of being present in distance education take on multiple configurations and different dimensions of learning testify to needs and realities that are sometimes distinct depending on the life cycle. This project will be of interest to partners in the targeted field as well as to all teacher trainers, students in initial teacher training, practicing college teachers, and to university professors. The entire educational community will benefit from digital resources in education. The scientific knowledge resulting from this action research will benefit researchers in the fields of pedagogy, didactics, teacher training and pedagogy in higher education in a digital context.

Keywords : action research, didactics, digital learning environment, distance learning, higher education, pedagogy technological, pedagogical content knowledge